

# Graffiti for intellectuals



Simon Says



JUNE  
19  
2006



By Si Frumkin

## **THE COOLING! THE WARMING!! THE DEADLY POISON IVY!!!**

If you are younger than 50 or so you probably don't remember the horrible danger that our planet was in about 35 years ago: *Global Cooling!* It was just as threatening and certain as the Global Warming is today. The scientific data were all there – the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado predicted a return to the ice age due to atmospheric manmade pollution blocking the sun!

This dire prediction was immediately picked up by prestigious publications: *Science magazine* (Dec. 10, 1976) warned of "extensive Northern Hemisphere glaciation"; *Science Digest* (February 1973) reported that "the world's climatologists are agreed that we must prepare for the next ice age"; *The Christian Science Monitor* (Aug. 27, 1974) printed that glaciers "have begun to advance", "growing seasons in England and Scandinavia are getting shorter" and "the North Atlantic is cooling down about as fast as an ocean can cool." *Newsweek* (April 28, 1975) agreed that meteorologists "are almost unanimous" that catastrophic famines might result from the global cooling. *New York Times* (Sept. 14 and May 21, 1975) confirmed the return of another ice age and an inevitable major cooling of the climate: "...it was well established that the Northern Hemisphere's climate has been getting cooler since about 1950."



And then, nothing happened! The Global Cooling scare went away, replaced by another scare: the apocalyptic, terrifying and inevitable Global Warming!

This time man-made CO<sub>2</sub> is the culprit. Unless it is immediately reduced, it will create the Greenhouse Effect resulting in warmer temperatures, melting ice packs and glaciers, catastrophically rising sea levels and the termination of life on Earth.

There is just one thing wrong with this scenario:

**TOTAL HUMAN CONTRIBUTION TO GREENHOUSE GASES ACCOUNTS FOR ONLY ABOUT 0.28% OF THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT". MAN-MADE CARBON DIOXIDE (CO<sub>2</sub>) COMPRISES ABOUT 0.117% OF THE TOTAL, AND MAN-MADE SOURCES OF OTHER GASES (METHANE, NITROUS OXIDE, OTHER GASES) CONTRIBUTES ANOTHER 0.163%.**

OF THE 186 BILLION TONS OF CO<sub>2</sub>

THAT ENTER EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE EACH YEAR, ONLY 6 BILLION TONS COME FROM HUMAN ACTIVITY. APPROXIMATELY 90 BILLION TONS COME FROM BIOLOGIC ACTIVITY IN THE OCEANS AND ANOTHER 90 BILLION TONS FROM VOLCANOES AND DECAYING LAND PLANTS

APPROXIMATELY 99.72% OF THE "GREENHOUSE EFFECT" IS DUE TO NATURAL CAUSES – MOSTLY WATER VAPOR AND TRACES OF OTHER GASES WHICH WE CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT.

### **ELIMINATING ALL HUMAN ACTIVITY WOULD HAVE MINIMAL IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE!**

CO<sub>2</sub> is odorless, colorless and tasteless. Plants breathe CO<sub>2</sub> and emit oxygen. CO<sub>2</sub> is a nutrient, not a pollutant, and all life – plants and animals – benefit from it.

So is there Global Warming? Yes, there is and we are in the middle of it. It started about 18,000 years ago when most of the earth surface was frozen. Over the last 15,000 years Global Warming has changed our world from an icebox to a garden. The

ble for the Irish Potato Famine and the demise of medieval Viking colonies in Greenland.

The Poison Ivy study is one of the more absurd examples of Global Warming scare tactics. I heard about it on National Public Radio and read an Associated Press release that was picked up by many publications. The 5-year study involved growing poison ivy in a CO<sub>2</sub>-enriched warm atmosphere that was supposed to mimic post-Global Warming conditions. As a result it grew about 150% bigger and more poisonous than usual. This conjured a picture of yet another Global Warming danger – a planet covered by deadly poisonous plants! I can only wonder why the experimenters chose poison ivy instead of, say, corn, wheat, pineapples or potatoes – in fact, any plants will grow better in a warm and CO<sub>2</sub> enriched atmosphere. We know that during the past warming cycles, growing seasons lengthened and in some areas there were two or even three harvests, and an increase in food supply.

Finally, the melting glaciers and polar ice caps that will cause humanity to drown in the rising oceans. The Global Warming aficionados predict that sea levels will rise between 1 and 3 feet in the next 100 to 150 years. These figures are disputed by many scientists who believe that the rise – if any – will be a matter of inches rather than feet. But even if the doomsayers are right and water will indeed rise 3 feet within the next century – well, surely this will happen gradually, so that affected populations can be safely relocated elsewhere to enjoy the warm weather and the different ocean views.

And so, enjoy our planet – the sky is not falling. If you want to learn more about it in greater detail, go to Google and look for "Global Warming: a chilling perspective", Monte and Harrison Hieb and look at the references by real scientists .



cycles in our planet's temperature are well known and understood: there are the 100,000-, 41,000- and 21,000-year cycles that are caused by the slight wobble of Earth's orbit around the Sun. The shorter cycles – 206 and 11 years – are caused by periodic sunspot activity.

Earth's climate was in a warming period from about 1000 CE to 1350 CE when it started cooling again. This "Little Ice Age" lasted until about 1860 and is likely responsi-

# WHY DOES HE STILL GROWL?

Richard Pipes, June 2006

**Why does** the bear growl even though the Cold War has long ended? Why do they invite the terrorist Hamas leaders to Moscow? Why do they cut off natural gas to Ukraine and thereby reduce its flow to Western Europe? Why do they harass foreign non-governmental organizations, accusing them of espionage and incitement to revolution? Why do they carry out joint military exercises with the Chinese, clearly aimed at Taiwan?

There are many causes to account for such actions that range from noncooperation to outright hostility. Two stand out. One is Russia's inability to find for itself a proper place in the international community. This sense of isolation has deep historical roots. As a country professing Orthodox Christianity

derived from Byzantium, Russians have always felt alienated from Catholic and Protestant Europe, not to speak of Islamic and Buddhist Asia.



Although religion today plays a much smaller role in politics than it did in the past, the sense of alienation persists in secular form. Public opinion polls indicate that the majority of Russians regard the West as an enemy and do not want to follow Western ways. The Russian press is filled with snide remarks about Europe and the United States and finds satisfaction in any unfavorable news emanating from there.

Even after the loss of its empire, Russia remains the largest country in the world. This spaciousness contributes to the sense of alienation. Russians take immense pride in the vastness of their land: They tend to think that they are not a country like the others, but a continent. They further believe that by virtue of their size they are entitled to superpower status and as such have a right to a decisive voice in world affairs. The Russian language promotes this illusion because the word *velikii* means both "large" and "great."

The other factor that reinforces the sense of isolation and hostility to the outside world has to do with Russia's anti-democratic, authoritarian tradition. Although during the Soviet era Russia was widely perceived as a radical country, its radicalism was confined to Marxist-Leninist slogans meant exclusively for export. In reality, it was a reactionary regime which had more in common with the autocracy of a Nicholas I or an Alexander III than with the socialist ideals of the radical intelligentsia.

The Russian political tradition is solidly conservative, so much so that even its Marxism acquired a conservative coloring. Until 1991, Russia had abandoned autocracy only twice in its history -- in the early 17th century and again in 1917 -- and in both cases the collapse of autocracy led not to a liberal regime but to anarchy, which resulted in the restoration of absolutism. The same process seems to be underway today.

Russians are to a remarkable extent depoliticized. They do not believe that ordi-



nary people can have any influence over their government, which they view as a closed corporation of officials who look out for their own interests. Hence they dismiss democratic elections and procedures as fraud. What matters to them is not that the government reflects their preferences -- in their opinion, no government ever does -- but that it be strong and effective. Its main function is to preserve order. When asked by pollsters what is more important to them, order or freedom, three-fourths reply order, apparently assuming the two incompatible.

A factor which encourages this conception of good government is that Russians do not trust one another. Mutual trust, which is essential to the functioning of a civil society, is in very short supply. Except for their family and close friends, Russians tend to view one another as enemies. This perception, too, favors undemocratic government in that the majority of Russians rely on the authorities to protect them from

their neighbors. They are not only depoliticized but also desocialized. Russia today, as in the past, consists of a multitude of tiny enclaves to which the government feels no responsibility and which expect very little from those who rule them. Judging by voting results, a mere 10% of Russians, mostly concentrated in large cities, hold Western views of the powers and duties of government.

The cause of this is in some measure the deliberate refusal of the post-communist regime to make a clean break with the Soviet past. Outside of the two capital cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg, the relics of the communist era are everywhere in evidence. There are countless Lenin statues scattered throughout the country, exhorting the people to march forward to communism. The streets are commonly named after communist events and heroes. President Putin recently adopted the old Soviet national anthem (with changed words) as that of the Russian Federation. In February each year the country celebrates the founding of the Red Army in 1918. No wonder that according to opinion polls, nearly one-third of Russians, presumably mostly residents of rural districts and small towns, are not aware that the Soviet regime no longer exists: They still continue to view it as "their" government.

These factors portend lasting trouble in Russia's relations with the outside world. Neither the Russian government nor the population at large is able to establish a *modus vivendi* with the international community. They feel they are unique, that they are surrounded by enemies, that these enemies deny them their rightful place on the globe. The authorities encourage these feelings because they create a bond between them and their subjects that is otherwise very weakly developed.



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By Michael Barone

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT  
MAY 29, 2006

## Heard the Good News?

**T**HINGS ARE BETTER THAN YOU THINK. YES, I know, most Americans are in a sour mood these days, convinced that the struggle in Iraq is an endless cycle of bloodshed, certain that our economy is in dismal shape, lamenting that the nation and the world are off on the wrong track. That's what polls tell us. But if we look at some other numbers, we'll find that we are living not in the worst of times but in something much closer to the best. What do I mean?

First, economic growth. In 2005, as in 2004, the world economy grew by about 5 percent, according to the International Monetary Fund, and the IMF projects similar growth for several years to come. This is faster growth than in all but a few peak years in the 1980s and 1990s, and it's in vivid contrast to the long periods of stagnation or contraction in history. The great engine of this growth is, of course, the United States, which produces more than one fifth of world economic product and whose gross domestic product has been growing at around 4 percent—4.8 percent in the latest quarter. Other engines are China and India, each with about a sixth of the world's people, and with economic growth of 10 and 8 percent, respectively. But other areas are growing, too: eastern Europe (5 percent), Russia (6 percent), East Asia (5 percent), Latin America (4 percent), even the Middle East (6 percent) and sub-Saharan Africa (5.5 percent).

**Free-market benefits.** Lagging behind is the euro area (1 percent) and the rest of western Europe (2 percent). Lesson: Sclerotic welfare states produce mass unemployment and stifle initiative and innovation. In contrast, the Chinese and Indian growth rates show how freeing up an economy produces rapid growth, and the continued contrast between the United States and Europe makes the same point. Free-market economic growth is enabling millions of people to rise out of poverty every year, even more than the experts expect. As the IMF writes, "The momentum and resilience of the global economy in 2005 continued to exceed expectations."

It's worth noting, as the IMF does, that this growth is being achieved with minimal inflation. "The present era of globalization and low inflation has an important precedent: 1880-1914, the era of the classical gold stand-

ard," it says. That period ended with the outbreak of World War I, and there is no guarantee that the current low-inflation growth will continue. There are always downside risks in the economy. But we seem to be living by far in the best economic times in human history.

But aren't we also living in times of record strife? Actually, no. Just the opposite. The Human Security Centre of the University of British Columbia has been keeping track of armed conflicts since World War II. It reports that the number of genocides and violent conflicts dropped rapidly after the end of the Cold War and that in 2005 the number of armed conflicts was down 40 percent from 1992. Wars have also become less deadly: The average number of people killed per conflict per year in 1950 was 38,000; in 2002 it was just 600. The conflict in Iraq has not significantly changed that picture. American casualties are orders of magnitude lower than in the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, and precision weapons have enabled us to vastly reduce the civilian death toll.

After our victory in the Cold War, Francis Fukuyama proclaimed that we had reached "the end of history," by which he meant the end of any serious argument over what constitutes the best kind of society. That is disputed by the Islamist fascists who have made it clear that they will do whatever they can to inflict harm on our civilization; as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in his recent letter to President Bush, "Liberalism and western-style democracy have not been able to help realize the ideals of humanity. Today those two concepts have failed." That's obviously nonsense, of course. Free markets and democ-

racy are chalking up one ringing achievement after another—as we can see from the surge in world economic growth and the reduction of armed conflict—while the Islamists can achieve their goals only through oppression and slaughter. Yes, they can inflict severe damage on us by asymmetric warfare, as they did on September 11, and we must continue to take determined action to prevent them from doing so again. Yes, a nuclear Iran is a severe threat. But we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that, in most important respects, our civilization is performing splendidly. ●

Despite all the grumping, the world is currently enjoying a record period of peace and prosperity.



A new Wal-Mart Supercenter; the economy's going great guns.



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## BUSH KNOWS HIS HISTORY

Michael Barone, USN&WR, June 12, 2006

**Two weeks** ago, I pointed out that we live in something close to the best of times, with record worldwide economic growth and at a low point in armed conflict in the world. Yet Americans are in a sour mood, a mood that may be explained by the lack of a sense of history. The military struggle in Iraq (2,473 U.S. military deaths) is spoken of in as dire terms as Vietnam (58,219), Korea (54,246) or World War II (405,399). We bemoan the cruel injustice of \$3 a gallon for gas in a country where three quarters of people classified as poor have air conditioning and microwave ovens. We complain about a tide of immigration that is, per U.S. resident, running at one third the rate of 99 years ago.

George W. Bush has a better sense of history. Speaking May 27 at the commencement ceremony at West Point-above the Hudson River where revolutionary Americans threw a chain across the water to block British ships- Bush noted that he was speaking to the first class to enter the academy after the September 11 attacks. And he put the challenge these cadets willingly undertook in perspective by looking back at the challenges America faced at the start of the Cold War 60 years ago.



"In the early years of that struggle," Bush noted, "freedom's victory was not obvious or assured." In 1946, Harry Truman accompanied Winston Churchill as he delivered his Iron Curtain speech; in 1947, Communists threatened Greece and Turkey; in 1948, Czechoslovakia fell, France and Italy seemed headed the same way and Berlin was blockaded by the Soviets, who exploded a nuclear weapon

the next year; in 1950, North Korea attacked South Korea. "All of this took place in just the first five years following World War II," Bush noted. "Fortunately, we had a president named Harry Truman, who recognized the threat, took bold action to confront it, and laid the foundation for freedom's victory in the

Cold War."

Bold action: The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan in 1947, the Berlin airlift in 1948, the NATO Treaty in 1949, the Korean war in 1950. None of these was uncontroversial, and none was perfectly executed. And this was only the beginning. It took 40 years-many of them filled with angry controversy-to win the Cold War.

The struggles against Soviet communism and Islamo-fascist terrorists are of course not identical. But there are similarities.

"Like the Cold War, we are fighting the followers of a murderous ideology that despises freedom, crushes all dissent, has territorial ambitions, and pursues totalitarian aims," Bush said. "And like the Cold War, they're seeking weapons of mass murder that would allow them to deliver catastrophic destruction to our country."

Misreading Truman. The New Republic's Peter Beinart argues that Bush, unlike Truman, has shown no respect for international institutions. But the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan were unilateral American initiatives, and Truman used the United Nations to respond in Korea only because the Soviets were then boycotting the Security Council. Otherwise he would have gone to war, as Bill

Clinton did in Kosovo, without U.N. approval. Bush did try to use the U.N. on Iraq but was blocked by France and Russia, both stuffed with profits from the corrupt U.N. Oil for Food program. But as Bush pointed out, we have worked with 90-plus nations and NATO in Afghanistan and with 70-plus nations on the Proliferation Security Initiative. We're working with allies to halt Iran's nuclear program.

"We can't have lasting peace unless we work actively and vigorously to bring about conditions of freedom and justice in the world," Harry Truman told the West Point class of 1952. Which is what we're trying to do today-in Iraq and the broader Middle East, in Afghanistan, even Africa.

Reports of Bush's West Point speech noted that Truman had low job ratings-lower than Bush's, in fact. But does that matter now? Bush, as Yale historian John Lewis Gaddis has written, has changed American foreign policy more than any president since Truman, and like Truman acted on the long view. "The war began on my watch," Bush told the class of 2006, "but it's going to end on your watch." Truman might have made the same point, accurately as it turned out, to the class of 1952. We're lucky we had then, and have now, a president who takes bold action and braves vitriolic criticism to defend our civilization against those who would destroy it.